



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Karen F. Morton, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, November 20, 2012

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Somers called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Morton, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Streeter
Members Absent: Councilor Watson

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.

3. Calendar and Communications

None.

4. NEW BUSINESS

2012-0314 Crystal Lake Road Reconstruction Project - CIP Reallocation

Discussed

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, reviewed the schedule for consultant selection for preliminary engineering noting that design should start by April 15. There is a 10% Town match for the project. The Town Council and RTM had authorized \$34,000 based on a Public Works cost estimate. As a result of tests done by DOT, it was discovered that more work is required increasing the local match to \$63,000. Mr. Schneider explained that there is funding left over in the Poquonnock Road sidewalk project and he proposes to reallocate \$20,300 from that project to the Crystal Lake Road Reconstruction Project. The Town will manage the engineering work and the State DOT will manage land-taking and construction. Next year's budget will include a request for funds to support final engineering and the following year a request will be made for the Town's 10% match for construction. If the Poquonnock Road sidewalk funds are not spent on this project, they will be returned to Capital Reserve.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Flax, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0259 Sandy Hollow Road Curbing

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger noted that a public hearing was held November 7th and Public Works presented a recommendation at that time for partial curbing. The Town Manager described the recommendation in detail.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Morton, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

Councilor Flax asked what guidelines the Town uses for installation of curbing and Mr. Schneider noted that the Town considers wetlands, runoff issues, and drainage discharge especially in densely developed areas. Streeter questioned the cost savings associated with the original paving project and Mr. Schneider stated he would provide the information to the Council. The Town

Manager noted that cost savings would usually be applied to other roads programmed.

The motion carried unanimously

2009-0124

Ethics Ordinance

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger noted that Councilors received information on the COG regional ethics commission proposal, the Norwich ethics program, and Griswold ethics issues for review and consideration. The Town Attorney will be present at the November 27th meeting to discuss the Town's draft ethics ordinance.

2011-0032

Sister Cities Committee - Update

Discussed

Councilor Johnson noted that two members of the Committee have resigned. He would recommend that the committee be a subcommittee of the Economic Development Commission. Town Manager Oefinger noted that the Town has explored Sister Cities relationships before, but there has never been a successful match. He explained that a Sister Cities relationship is very formal. It has educational, cultural, and economic aspects. Mayor Somers suggested deleting the referral and dissolving the committee. Councilors Antipas and Johnson were the only councilors interested in pursuing the concept and they stated they would come back to the Council with a plan.

2012-0007

Meeting with State Legislators (2012 Standing Referral)

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger noted that a meeting will be scheduled with state legislators for some time in December, as soon as all legislators have responded to the invitation. Councilors were asked to e-mail suggested topics for discussion to the Mayor. Discussion followed on unfunded mandates.

2012-0175

FYE 2014 Budget Process

Discussed

Councilors received the schedule for the FYE 2014 budget. Discussion followed on the October 13th workshop held on the FYE 2014 budget. Specifically, Councilors discussed the request by some members of the public that Town Council budget discussions be televised.

Discussion followed on identifying services to cut. The Town Manager noted that budget guidance in the form of a percentage increase or decrease is not helpful. The Town Council should have some idea of what services to investigate. If there are particular pieces or programs that the Council wants information on, the Town Manager asked that Councilors identify them so that the information can be made available ahead of budget deliberations. Mayor Somers asked that the information be forwarded to her by December 1st.

Town Manager Oefinger explained that people are looking for a zero dollar increase in taxes, but there is a constant shift in state and federal revenues. Also, the Board of Education accounts for 60-65% of the budget and that portion cannot be touched. Further, Councilors must have the political will to deal with the increases in the political subdivision budgets. The remainder of the budget has grown only 1.2% per year on average.

Mayor Somers noted that in light of the presidential election results and citizens' willingness to pay more in taxes, perhaps the Town Council is being unrealistic and should focus on providing services as efficiently as possible and raising revenue. Councilor Morton suggested that it is important to look at services and begin to prioritize them in terms of overall importance.

Discussion followed on the vehicle maintenance operation and Councilor Peruzzotti stated she would like to revisit providing those services to fire districts and other outside entities.

The Town Manager noted he is waiting for an update on when the Police Study will be available.

The consensus of the Town Council was to televise budget sessions.

2012-0285 Adoption of 2013 Town Council Regular Meeting Schedule

Recommended for a Resolution

Discussion followed on the committee structure and meeting times. Councilors acknowledged that only the Committee of the Whole and Personnel, Rules and Appointments Committee have any business.

A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Mayor Somers, to eliminate the regular meeting schedules for Group I and II, to begin Committee of the Whole meetings at 6:00 p.m., and to schedule Personnel, Rules, and Appointments Committee meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m., prior to the Town Council meeting.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 7 - Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Morton, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Streeter
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Johnson

2012-0286 Adoption of 2013 Town Council Committee of the Whole Regular Meeting Schedule

Recommended for a Resolution

See discussion in 11/20/12 Committee of the Whole minutes under #2012-0285 Adoption of 2013 Town Council Regular Meeting Schedule.

2012-0287 Adoption of 2013 Town Council Group I Regular Meeting Schedule

Recommended for a Resolution

See discussion in 11/20/12 Committee of the Whole minutes under #2012-0285 Adoption of 2013 Town Council Regular Meeting Schedule.

2012-0288 Adoption of 2013 Town Council Group II Regular Meeting Schedule

Discussed and Recommended no action taken

See discussion in 11/20/12 Committee of the Whole minutes under #2012-0285 Adoption of 2013 Town Council Regular Meeting Schedule.

5. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List

Recommended for Deletion:

2011-0195 Efficiency of Town and Board of Education Services

Recommended for Deletion

2012-0072 Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) Legislative Agenda

Recommended for Deletion

2012-0073 Proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Groton Concerning Highway CIP Projects

Recommended for Deletion

6. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.